

CITY OF MESA
HUMAN RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD (HRAB)
Ad Hoc ISSUES RESEARCH AND ACTION TEAM (IRA)
April 11, 2013 Minutes

The Issues Research and Action Team of the City of Mesa met on April 11th, 2013, at 5:00pm.
at the Mesa City Plaza, 20 E. Main St. Ste. 250.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Denise Heap, Chair
Lela Hinds-Peterson
Frank Johnson
Cliff Moon

MEMBERS ABSENT

Orchidia Peterson

STAFF PRESENT

Andrea Arenas
Ruth Giese

GUESTS

Darrel Johnson

1. Call to Order.

Ms. Heap called the meeting to order at 4:58pm.

2. Items from citizens present.

There were no citizens who requested to speak to IRA.

3. Approval of the March 14th, 2013 IRA meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Moon to approve March 11th, 2013 minutes and Mr. Johnson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Discuss and consider whether HRAB should take action on the item presented during the March 27th, 2013 meeting regarding a residential rental tax code.

Ms. Heap stated that she does not think there is an issue that the board needs to address, although she feels for Mr. Crismon's personal situation. Ms. Heap stated that she is in agreement with Ms. Lotz, an HRAB board member, who supplied an email statement stating that she does not feel that there is discrimination given that Mr. Crismon is collecting a maintenance fee by choice. Ms. Heap stated that the only potential discrimination would be the definition of an individual versus a corporation; however the board is not the correct affiliate to make that determination. Mr. Moon stated that he is unsure whether there is discrimination or not. Ms. Hinds-Peterson stated that she does not find it discriminatory given that the law is the same across the state, and there are options to avoid the additional taxation. Mr. Johnson commented that he came across the same issue himself, but he found means to resolve it and Mr. Crismon has multiple options as well. Ms. Heap stated that there may be issues that need to be looked at regarding rental tax, but the HRAB is not the appropriate group/agency to do so given the legal and tax code expertise required to evaluate such. Ms. Hinds-Peterson made the motion to advise Mr. Crismon that this is not an HRAB issue, Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Hear update on the research, discuss and consider the creation of anti-harassment and non-discrimination ordinances for the City of Mesa, and best practices for community response to hate crimes with Ryan Russell, Mesa Police Department, and Darrel Johnson, City of Mesa resident.

Ms. Giese advised that she had done some research on other cities that have passed a similar ordinance. Ms. Giese explained that Salt Lake City, Utah passed a non-discrimination ordinance unanimously in December 2009 by conducting a series of community dialogues and compiling a report based on the needs expressed by the public. The Human Rights Commission, similar to HRAB, along with city support conducted community engagement forums on topics such as faith, sexual orientation, ableism, racism, and sexism to

solicit feedback whether a particular group feels discriminated again and how. After hearing the responses, the Human Rights Commission made a detailed report of the findings and provided recommendations to the city council. The Salt Lake City Council passed two ordinances as recommend by the commission protecting against discrimination of sexual orientation in the housing and employment industries within the city limits. These were not the only issues acknowledged by the community, but were the areas identified by the commission where there were no other legal services in place. Ms. Giese provided members with excerpts from the report.

Mr. Johnson stated that he thinks it is a great idea. Ms. Hinds-Peterson agreed that having a community driven model would be beneficial. Ms. Heap also concurred that this outline is a good idea and will provide solid research and data. Ms. Heap stated her concern managing conflicting public opinions during an open forum. Ms. Giese advised that she can contact the Salt Lake City Diversity Office, who was responsible for assisting the commission, for more detailed information based on the direction from IRA. Other areas of concerns include: means of involving community members that may not be able to attend the forums, whether to included feedback from employees that work in Mesa but do not reside in Mesa, whether outside assistance will be needed (such as a consulting firm), which discussion themes they will include, and how many meetings they will hold. The members agreed to hold an additional meeting in order to vote after they had time to think about whether this approach is best for Mesa and to determine a course of action.

6. Hear update on the research, discuss and take action on preparing language referencing the City of Mesa being an employer of choice for veterans.

Ms. Heap advised that she has not received the information needed to move forward with this request. Ms. Giese stated that staff will do the research necessary and report back to the members for discussion and action.

7. Discuss future agenda items, meeting dates, announcements, other housekeeping

An additional meeting was scheduled for April 24th, 2013 at 5pm.

- Next meeting will be held on May 9th, 2013 at 5pm.

8. Adjournment.

Meeting adjourned at 5:50pm.

Submitted By:



Ruth Giese,
Diversity Program Administrator